

Truro Rural District Council.



PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

FOR 1939

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Medical Officer of Health



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Truro Rural District Council.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT YEAR 1939.

Public Health Officers. Medical Officer. Part time, holds diploma of Public Health, is also District Medical Officer, Perranzabuloe District and Public Vaccinator for Perranzabuloe and St. Allen Parishes.

Sanitary Inspector. Mr. E. R. C. Harvey, Associate Royal Sanitary Institute, whole time. Appointed Meat Inspector under the 1934 Public Health Meat Regulations. Inspector under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926. Inspector under County of Cornwall Act, 1929. (Ice Cream).

Mr. F. Pickering, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., whole time, Housing Inspector.

The salaries of the first two are contributed to by the Ministry, under the Public Health Acts, or by Exchequer grants.

To the Chairman and Members of the

Rural District Council of Truro.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of your district for 1939.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Area 106,504 acres.

Population :—

The estimated mid population for 1939 was 24,155. This shows an increase from 23,770 the figure for 1937.

The continued popularity of the district as a summer holiday resort makes the provision of accommodation and catering for the visitors the most important occupation for the residents. The mild and equable climate attracts many elderly and invalid people to live in it. Hence the population continues to be to a large extent elderly with a consequent low birth rate and high crude death rate.

Up till the tension over International affairs in August everything pointed to a prosperous year as regards summer visitors. Then came the crisis and war with a large exodus of visitors, however a considerable number remained on for varying periods of the winter to considerably increase the population.

No appreciable number of government evacuees were received.

Interest in First Aid work increased and many extra courses of lectures were given as well as in gas for A.R.P. workers.

The conditions call for only a brief report and in general Health Services remain as before except where specially mentioned.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births :	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Legitimate	305	170	135
Illegitimate	16	8	8
Totals	321	178	143

Live Birth Rate :—13·2 per 1,000 of the population.

The reduction of the birth rate from 14·8 is unsatisfactory but the large excess of males born is unusual in the area.

There is a large excess of deaths over births to some extent accentuated by the presence of elderly people who have evacuated

Illegitimate Live Birth Rate 49 per 1,000 live births.

The presence of Rosemundy Home in the area has to be considered when reviewing these figures.

STILL BIRTHS :—	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	6	5	10
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	5	5	10

Still Birth Rate :—·43 per 1,000 of the population a satisfactory rate when compared with ·60 the figure for the whole country. This year, none of the deaths were of the illegitimate children,

Deaths :—	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
	184	198	382

Crude Death Rate :—15·6 per 1,000 of the population.

The rise in the crude death rate is to be noted and the excess of female deaths.

With such a large proportion of elderly people among the population, the crude death rate is not a true figure for comparison with the rate for England as a whole or other areas in which the percentage of young and old people may be very different. Adjusting the rate for this variation it is found that :—

Adjusted Death Rate is 11·5 which gives a very satisfactory figure in comparison with 12·1 the figure for the country as a whole.

The local adjusted death rate ratio to the national crude death rate is thus ·95 or a mortality 5% below that of the country as a whole.

Death of Infants under 1 year of age :—

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	15	5	20
Illegitimate	—	1	1

Infantile Mortality Rate 62 per 1,000 live births.

This rate compares with 50 for the country as a whole and shows a big increase from the year previous, which was 48.

The following death rates for certain diseases are worthy of comparison with those of the County as a whole; being the rate per 1,000 of the population.

Measles	—	England and Wales	'01
Scarlet Fever	—	„	'01
Whooping Cough	'08	„	'03
Diphtheria	--	„	'05
Influenza	'48	„	'21
Diarrhoea, Infants	—	„	46 per
under 2 years			1,000 live births

The absence of deaths from the common infectious diseases as recorded above is very welcome.

Heart disease accounts for about one quarter of the total deaths and cancer for just under one seventh as in the previous year; Tuberculosis with fewer deaths in a large total contributes a smaller proportion than the previous year.

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 live and still births
Puerperal Sepis	—	—
Other Puerperal causes	3	9'3
Total	3	9'3
This compares with	...	...
for the country as a whole.		2'82

Detailed Analysis of Causes of Deaths.

CAUSES OF DEATH		MALES	FEMALES
ALL CAUSES		184	193
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid ...	—	—
2	Measles ...	—	—
3	Scarlet Fever ...	—	—
4	Whooping Cough ...	1	1
5	Diphtheria ...	—	—
6	Influenza ...	5	7
7	Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—
8	Cerebrospinal Fever ...	—	—
9	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	6	3
10	Other Tuberculous Diseases ...	2	1
11	Syphilis ...	1	—
12	General Paralysis of the Insane ...	1	1
	Tabes dorsalis ...		
13	Cancer Malignant Disease ...	32	26
14	Diabetes ...	2	5
15	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc. ...	9	9
16	Heart Disease ...	41	62
17	Anenrym ...	1	—
18	Other Circulatory Diseases ...	10	11
19	Bronchitis ...	1	2
20	Pneumonia (all forms) ...	5	5
21	Other respiratory diseases ...	2	1
22	Peptic Ulcer ...	—	2
23	Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years) ...	—	—
24	Appendicitis ...	3	—
25	Cirrhosis of Liver ...	—	—
26	Other diseases of Liver, etc. ...	—	2
27	Other Digestive Diseases ...	2	3
28	Acute and Chronic Nephritis ..	8	2
29	Puerperal Sepsis ...	—	—
30	Other Puerperal Causes ...	—	3
31	Congenital Debility, Premature Birth ...	11	4
	Malformations, etc. ...		
32	Senility ...	14	27
33	Suicide ...	1	1
34	Other Violence ...	11	3
35	Other Defined Causes ...	15	17
36	Causes Ill-defined or unknown causes ...	—	—
37	Diarrhœa, 2 years and over ...	—	—
Special Causes (included in 35 above)			
	Small-pox	—	—
	Poliomyelitis	—	—
	Polioencephalitis	—	—

These remain as previously except for the two following additions.

Hospital Accommodation. The opening of the new blocks at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary is a most notable event, particularly as regards the orthopædic wards and the provision of medical beds.

First Aid Points were established in several of the large villages in the area.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA:—

Water Supplies. Conditions remained much as in 1938 with the dry cycle of years continuing and the marked difficulties in maintaining supplies at the larger seaside resorts.

The emergency supplies at Perranporth and St. Mawes and St. Agnes were in use many months and Flushing had a long period with water only available for a few hours daily.

The Council have schemes before the Ministry of Health for putting these emergency sources with others into permanent works. Exploratory work has already been carried out at St. Mawes and St. Agnes.

In most parts of the area where wells are the source of supply the population managed to carry on although having to go further afield for their supply.

Some private and public pumps suffered damage in the December frosts, but the public ones were speedily repaired.

Frequent samples of water from public piped supplies have been taken and analysed and found to be of good quality. In a few cases wells have not been entirely satisfactory and then notices have been posted to warn consumers to boil the water until the defect has been remedied and the water found to be of good quality.

Improvements to several existing wells and their surroundings have been carried out.

Water Extension. 300 yards of 3 inch water main together with the provision of 3 Fire Hydrants was laid at St. Mawes to meet the needs of a residential area.

Infectious Disease. Another year with little infectious disease of any note except for the widespread influenza epidemic which was much more severe in type than that of 1938. This is reflected in the large number of deaths from this disease.

Some 70 visits to cases of infectious disease were made and rooms disinfected in several and for several cases where death was due to Cancer at the special request of relatives or house owners. The expected epidemic among evacuated children at the end of the year did not eventuate, however their number was not large.

Cancer deaths show a very marked increase among males and the number exceeds that of the females.

Rivers and Streams. No complaints have been received or made respecting the pollution of rivers or streams.

Closet Accommodation. 16 conversions from Middens and Earth Closets to Water Closets have been carried out during the year without assistance from the Council. They were mainly in the isolated parts where there is no sewerage system.

Public Conveniences. The Public Conveniences maintained by the Council at St. Agnes, (4). Portscatho and St. Mawes, have justified the erection of same. They are by no means "self supporting" but have met the need of the "self respecting." It is contemplated that in the near future such Conveniences will be provided in other parts of the area, amongst them being Portloe and Holywell,

Scavenging. Collection of House Refuse and Street Sweeping.

All the villages and larger hamlets in the area have a weekly collection of house refuse, whilst many of the smaller hamlets the refuse is collected fortnightly.

Semi-controlled tipping is the method adopted for disposing the refuse.

Systematic weekly collection of house refuse is carried out in larger villages in the district and in some of the smaller hamlets the collection is every fortnight.

This service is constantly being extended and one is gratified to find on approaching the villages and hamlets that the wastrels abutting the highway are not disfigured with all kinds of refuse as was the case some 10 or 12 years ago, that is, before the Council undertook to collect the refuse.

The refuse is disposed of on dumps which are controlled.

Road sweeping is carried out on the streets of the larger villages. In some of the seaside places, twice a week in the summer season, and weekly during the remainder of the year.

Drainage and Sewerage. Extensions of existing Sewerage schemes continue to be made as the erection of new buildings make the same necessary. At Perranporth and St. Mawes such extensions have been made, and also at St. Agnes.

Two small extensions of the sewers in Perranporth have been carried out to meet development on building estates.

Conservancy. The only place in the area in which the Council undertake the collection and disposal of night soil, etc., is at Flushing.

Life Saving Appliances. The Council provides and maintains Lifebuoys and lines at the various places on the sea coast within the district.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area. 2,846 visits have been paid in connection with the duties as Sanitary Inspector. This figure does not include inspections made under the Housing Acts, which are referred to later in this report.

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections. (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers Prosecuted. (4)
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	20		Nil
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries)	40	3	Nil
Workplaces... .. (Other than Outworkers' premises)			
Total	60	3	Nil

2—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces

Particulars (1)	Number of defects			Number of Offences in respect to which Prosecutions were instituted
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts —</i>				
Want of cleanliness ...	3	3		
Want of ventilation ...				
Overcrowding ...				
Want of Drainage of floor				
Other nuisances ...				
Sanitary Accommodation } Insufficient unsuitable or defective. Not separate for sexes.				
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts :—</i>				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouses. (101)				
Other offences ...				
(Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921.)				
Total ...	3	3	Nil	Nil

Schools. The same remarks have again to be reported, Progress continues to be slow in providing the Schools with good lighting and drinking water. Improvement in sanitary conveniences could be well carried out in some cases.

The higher the standard set the children, the better theirs will be in later years.

HOUSING.

The outbreak of hostilities has been responsible for a great change in this important problem.

Fresh houses so urgently needed cannot now be built and the existing ones are likely to be crowded if air raids become most heavy. The Council however completed its slum clearance programme and all the houses have been occupied.

Buying up cottages has gone on even more rapidly. The unfortunate working man is in increasing difficulties to find suitable houses near the seaside resorts.

The problem of the delapidated house is a difficult matter many are in such a state that unless well repaired they will become uninhabitable and yet the materials to do the work are not available.

The Housing Officer obtained another appointment at the end of the year and his post will not be filled.

Statistics.

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year 1939 :—
 1. (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 560
 - (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 627
 2. (a) Number of dwelling houses (including under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Reg. of 1925 and 1932. 142
 - (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 205
 3. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to unfit for human habitation 12
 4. Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceeding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 35
2. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notice :

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers. ... 35

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... Nil

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices

(a) by owners ... Nil

(b) by Local Authority in default Nil

(b) Proceedings under the Public Health Acts:-

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied Nil

(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices

(a) by owners ... Nil

(b) by Local Authorities in default

(c) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :-

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... 2

(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... 1

(d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :-

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made Nil

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ... Nil

4. HOUSING ACT, 1936 - PART IV - OVERCROWDING

(a)	(1)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	...	...	...	Nil
	(2)	Number of families dwelling therein	...			Nil
	(3)	Number of persons dwelling therein	...			Nil
(b)		Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	...	..		Nil
(c)	(1)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	...	...	...	Nil
(d)	(2)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	...	...	...	Nil
(d)		Particulars of any cases in which dwelling houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	...			Nil

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM

Cases			Vision Unim- pared	Vision Impar- ed.	Total Blind- ness	Death
Notified	Treated					
	at Home	Hospital				
1		1	1	—	—	—

Prevention of Blindness

No action taken under Section 66 of the Public Health Amendment Act

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1939

			NEW CASES				DEATHS			
			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
Totals	...	...	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
			12	6	1	4	6	3	2	1

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis during 1939

DISEASE	Total cases Notified.	Cases admit- ted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Small-Pox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	10	8	—
Diphtheria	1	1	—
Enteric (including paratyphoid)	1	1	—
Pneumonia	35	—	10
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Erysipelas	11	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis	—	—	—

FOOD

Milk. Inspections are made of Farms etc. on which milk is produced. In many cases improvements have been carried out to sheds etc. particularly in regard to drainage and lighting, but there are very many premises where the standard falls below that prescribed by the Milk and Dairies Order.

Slaughterhouses. Frequent inspections are carried out of Slaughterhouses and one can say that generally these places have been vastly improved during the past decade.

As to the inspection of the carcasses and offal slaughtered it is only possible for a very small percentage to be dealt with. The scattered nature of the district and the number of Slaughterhouses makes the task of inspection almost insuperable.

Ice Cream. The premises on which Ice Cream is made are Registered and frequent visits are paid to same.

Tuberouloosis. A slight reduction in deaths is noticed and little improvement is likely to be seen with the war conditions now prevailing. There will probably be an influx of tuberculer evacuees when things become more unpleasant and it is to be hoped they will avoid using public and communal shelters so far as is possible.

A. RADBURNE FULLER.